Dignity and Respect

Overview

- Treating soldiers with dignity and respect is a readiness issue.
- Treating soldiers with dignity and respect maintains:
  - Unit Cohesion
  - Trust
  - Teamwork
- It is a leadership responsibility to ensure that all soldiers are treated with dignity and respect.
- Recent events focus our attentions on our implementation of the homosexual conduct policy (HCP)

Guidance

"Soldiers who offer their lives in service to this country should and must be treated with dignity, honor and respect. Respect for our fellow soldiers demands that we speak with respect for all…whenever we violate the trust of any soldier, we violate the trust of all soldiers."

SECARMY and CSA message dated 10 Jan 00
Subject: Dignity and Respect for All

Homosexual Conduct Policy (the basics)

- The prohibition against homosexual conduct continues in effect for the armed forces. (Title 10, US Code § 654)
- Three types of homosexual conduct that may result in separation:
  - Statements (Admissions)
  - Acts
  - Marriage or attempted marriage to a person of same sex
- Soldiers involved in homosexual conduct may be asked about the conduct.
- A person's sexual orientation, however, is a personal and private matter.
- Harassment or mistreatment, for any reason, will not be tolerated.

Harassment

"We affirm that treating soldiers with dignity and respect is a bedrock value for the army. We declare that there is no room for harassment or threats to any soldier in our army for any reason."

SECARMY and CSA message dated 10 Jan 00

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Possible Types of Harassment

- Verbal (on or off Duty)
- Jody calls that are degrading
- Inappropriate, abusive, threatening or persistently annoying language or references
- Graffiti in latrines, bulletin boards, etc.
- Anonymous threats; telephonic, electronic, etc.

Reporting Harassment

- Report harassment to chain of command
- Inform command about who harassed, what the harassment was, when and where it occurred.
- Leaders at every level will take appropriate action to prevent or react to harassment of any soldier.
- If a soldier wishes to talk with someone confidentially, they may talk with Legal Assistance Attorneys or chaplains.
- Soldiers may also report harassment to EO representatives or the IG.

Accountability

- Harassment or threats to soldiers for any reason destroys cohesion and degrades readiness and will not be tolerated.
- Soldiers who engage in, ignore or condone harassment will be held accountable.
- The best responses to inappropriate remarks or activities are immediate, on-the-spot corrections, long before they become commonplace occurrences within a unit and long before they seriously degrade the unit's ability to perform its mission.

The Importance of the Human Dimension of Leadership

- Many of us, when we are caught up in the execution of our responsibilities, discount attention focused on the human dimension of military service.
- We poke fun at those issues which directly and personally impact our lives.
- We tend to be more comfortable with the concrete and objective aspects of our mission such as specific tasks, operational readiness rates or unit strength reports.
- We are less comfortable with the subjective aspects of leadership.
- It is easy to focus on the tasks we are attempting to accomplish and forget that it is people (soldiers) who accomplish the tasks.

The Consequences of Neglecting the Human Dimension

- We are all aware that how we feel about ourselves, our leaders or our units impacts performance.
- These subjective elements impact morale, both our own and the units.
- Morale impacts commitment to the mission and commitment to the soldiers with whom we serve.
- Mistreatment and/or harassment eats at the heart of individual and unit morale and ultimately at the heart of soldier commitment.
- When morale and commitment erode, so will the the ability of soldiers and/or units to execute their mission.

To Put It Simply …

- Soldiers perform the tasks that accomplish missions.
- Attitude, morale and commitment effect the performance of the soldiers executing missions.
- The greater the cohesion and trust between soldiers within a unit, the better the morale and stronger the commitment.
- Better morale and stronger commitments result in better performance and better execution of the mission.
- Teaching, modeling and insisting that soldiers treat one another with dignity and respect achieves better morale, greater commitment, increased trust and cohesion … and better mission performance.

What We Need to Do

"Soldiers On Point for the Nation"

- Leaders treat subordinates with dignity and respect.
- Subordinates treat leaders with dignity and respect.
- Peers treat peers with dignity and respect.

"… individual relationships of trust grow the bonds that build unit cohesion. When individual dignity and respect are violated, mutual trust and unit cohesion erode. Harassment of any kind violates individual dignity and tears at the fabric of this trust and the cohesion of our Army."

GEN Eric K. Shinseki
21 July 2000

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